



# Healthy Eating

## Photos/Notes Page

## **Healthy Eating**

### **Starting Solid Food**

Up until one year, your baby should drink breastmilk or formula. At about four to six months, you can begin to add soft solid foods to her diet. For breastfed infants, water and other foods may not be needed until 6 months of age. Talk with your baby's doctor, nurse, or a nutritionist about introducing solid foods.

**Your baby may be ready to start solid foods when she:**

- Is at least 4 months old
- Can sit or hold her head up by herself
- Weighs at least double what she did at birth
- Will open her mouth for the spoon

Begin by feeding your baby a small amount of rice cereal on a baby spoon. At first, your baby may spit it out. This is normal. It takes time for your baby to get used to new foods and eating. Keep trying—a little bit at a time. It is okay to have a mess!

**Do not put cereal or food in a bottle—it can cause choking. It can also cause your baby to gain too much weight.**



### Keep Baby Food Safe

- Place the food in a dish—feeding from the jar may put germs in leftover food.
- Do not put leftover food or the used spoon back into the jar—it can cause the food to spoil.
- Cover and refrigerate what is left in the jar.
- Use the food within 2-3 days of opening the jar.

**If you make your own baby food**, do not add butter, oil, margarine, sugar, or salt, unless your doctor has told you to. Homemade baby food is cheaper than buying prepared food. When introducing a new food, prepare and serve it without adding anything. Food should be pureed, strained, or mashed. **Do not add honey to any of your child's food before the age of one.** There is a bacteria in honey that is dangerous for babies under one year.

## What to Feed Your Baby

Introduce one new food at a time. Wait 3-5 days before you add a new food. Put a check ✓ when you start new foods. Watch for signs of allergies: skin rash, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea or other change in stools, watery, itchy eyes, or breathing problems.

**CAUTION:** Avoid foods that can cause choking—popcorn, nuts, seeds, grapes, hot dogs, raisins, chunky peanut butter, and any other small hard foods. You can try smooth peanut butter after 2 years of age. Moisten it with applesauce or jelly and spread it thinly. Do not leave your child alone when he is eating.

### 4-6 months

Your baby is ready for baby cereals. Try rice cereal first—it is the easiest to digest. Then, you can try barley and oat cereal. Wait to give mixed-grain cereal until later.

### 4-6 months

- ☐ Rice cereal
- ☐ Barley cereal
- ☐ Oat cereal

### 6-9 months

Try mashed fruits and soft vegetables. Fruits can be fresh or cooked. At 8 months it is also time to add small amounts of protein foods, such as poultry, beans, fish, and meat. Always strain or cut them into small tender pieces. At about 8-9 months your baby will like to pick up small pieces of food and feed herself. Good finger foods include pieces of cheese, chicken, fresh fruits, and soft, cooked vegetables. Give one or two bits at a time. Let her feed herself while you are watching.

#### 6 months

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mango      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet potato   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banana     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooked carrots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaches    | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinach        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantaloupe | <input type="checkbox"/> Peas           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plums      | <input type="checkbox"/> Plantains      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pears      | <input type="checkbox"/> Squash         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applesauce | <input type="checkbox"/> Potato         |

#### 8 months

- ☐ Chicken
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Cooked beans
- ☐ Mild cheese
- ☐ Fish
- ☐ Beef

### 9-12 months

Your baby is now ready to eat many chopped table foods. Try egg yolks now, but do not give egg whites until your baby turns one year old.

#### 9 months

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crackers     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooked egg yolk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat cereal | <input type="checkbox"/> Pita bread      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rice         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bagels          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noodles      | <input type="checkbox"/> _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toast        | <input type="checkbox"/> _____           |

#### 12 months

- ☐ Cooked egg white
- ☐ Cows' milk
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_



## Drinking from a Cup

At about 6 months, your child may want to try drinking from a cup. Let her hold an empty, plastic cup to get used to it. Drinking from a cup is a new skill and takes practice. Start with a cup without a lid on it. Fill it with small amounts of water, formula, breastmilk, or juice. Once your child learns how to use the cup, you can add the lid to prevent spills.

Make sure the juice is 100% juice—not juice drinks. You may want to dilute juice with water. Limit juice to 4 ounces a day, so that your child will have an appetite for other foods.

Do not use cows' milk before 12 months. At 12 months, your child is ready for whole milk. Your child needs **whole milk** until age 2—not low-fat or skim milk.

As your child learns to use a cup and feed herself, she may begin to breastfeed less often. When you decide to stop breastfeeding, it is best to do it slowly. You can continue to breastfeed as long as you and your child want to.

## **Giving Up the Bottle**

At around 12 months, encourage your child to use the bottle less and the cup more. Slowly cut down the number of bottles and increase the number of cups each day. Morning and evening bottles are often the hardest to give up.

As your child learns to drink from a cup, she may still want a bottle for comfort. To help her feel more secure, try reading a story, singing, or cuddling while she drinks from a cup. When she seems distressed, try giving her a hug instead of a bottle. With your help, she will soon learn other ways to comfort herself.

Using a bottle too much can cause:

- Tooth decay
- Poor nutrition
- Overweight

Your child should be able to drink all of her liquids from a cup by 14 months of age.



## Here's What Your Child Should Eat Each Day

To keep your child healthy and strong, offer a variety of foods from the major food groups every day. Servings are smaller for children than for adults.

- **Fruits and vegetables.** Give at least five servings of fruits and vegetables. Offer many different colors to give your child many vitamins and minerals.
- **Dairy products and other foods with calcium.** Give your child 16 ounces or 2 cups of milk, yogurt, or cheese to build strong bones and teeth. Children under 2 should drink whole milk. It has extra fat for brain development. After age 2, give your child low-fat or skim milk.
- **Whole grains.** Serve whole grain bread, cereal, rice, and pasta often, instead of the refined, white kinds. Whole grains offer fiber and other important nutrients.
- **Protein.** Give lean meats and chicken. Also, offer more fish, beans, and nuts.
- **High-fat and high-sugar foods.** Think of these foods as “treats” or “sometimes foods,” not foods your child eats every day. Remember that juice has as much sugar as soda. Your child should drink no more than 4 ounces or 1/2 cup of 100% fruit juice a day.

## Snacks Are Meals, Too

Snacks are a good way for your child to get what he needs to grow. Your child may not want to eat at breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Maybe he is too tired or excited. That is okay. Help your child make good food choices. Offer different healthy foods as a snack.

A healthy snack is:

- Low in sugar, fat, and salt
- Food from one or more of the food groups

### Good Snacks

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Bananas	Frozen fruit juice on a stick
Oatmeal	Milk
Rice cakes	Yogurt
Applesauce	Cheese
Crackers	Cottage cheese
Cornbread	Baked sweet potatoes, cold or warm
Fruit juice	Hard-boiled eggs

## Special Feeding Issues

There may be times when your child needs special foods. Be sure to ask your doctor, nurse, or nutritionist if you have any questions about what your child should be eating or drinking.

### Foods to help children gain weight:

- Cheese made with whole milk
- Yogurts and puddings made with whole milk
- Peanut butter on bread or crackers after age 2
- Avocado
- Adding extra olive oil, cheese, yogurt, or milk powder to foods
- Ice cream
- Milk shakes made with whole milk, ice cream, banana, and peanut butter

If your baby is under 12 months and needs to gain weight, make sure that you are mixing his formula correctly. Offer it to him more often and for longer. If you are breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or nurse.

### Foods to loosen hard stools:

- Lots of water, juices
- Raw fruits and vegetables
- Prunes
- Whole grains
- Soft, cooked fruit

### **Foods for children who are vomiting:**

- Oral electrolyte maintenance solutions, like “Pedialyte” or “Rehydralyte,” if your doctor tells you to
- Popsicles
- Jello

### **Foods for children with diarrhea:**

- Water and “Pedialyte” or “Rehydralyte,” if your doctor tells you to
- Breastmilk
- Potatoes
- Rice
- Bananas
- Dry toast
- Applesauce

### **Clear liquids are:**

- Water
- Apple or white grape juice
- Clear soup or bouillon
- “Pedialyte” or “Rehydralyte,” if your doctor tells you to
- Jello